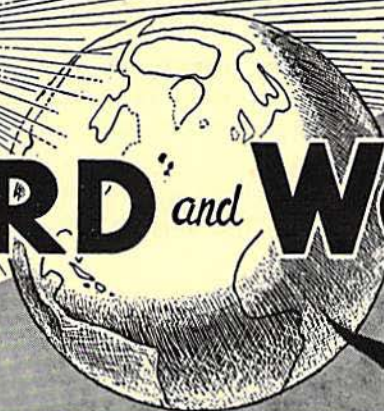


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JANUARY, 1980

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Wm. Robert Heid, Editor

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Robert Heid is a minister in Louisville, Kentucky.



God's Family

W. R. H.

When Do YOU Pray?

The amount of time that we spend in prayer depends on our concept of what prayer is, our history of having received answers from God, the presence of the Holy Spirit in our hearts, and many other things. Our very disposition and nature are powerful influences upon the depth of our prayer life. Surely we all are lacking in prayer, since Satan is, and always has been set against it. I have but little scripture to prove that Satan hates prayer—the final part of our armor is prayer—but there is plenty of proof from experience. How many times have prayer meetings at Portland been disturbed by little “demons” knocking on the church doors. And how often have personal prayers been distracted by a malicious neighbor with his uncanny obtrusions.

But when such offenders move from the neighborhood, do we then find our prayer-life encouraged and enriched. It should be so, but alas, not so. There is still the steep grade to climb if we are to be “much in prayer.” Since I usually judge others by my own case, (unfair as that may be) I want to make a few observations for my own help and perhaps for others.

I find that my prayers generally begin asking for help, which, of course is always needed. Some things that I try to do are utterly impossible without Him. But why are petitions always the first part of my conversation? Can it be that the voicing of requests is the one kind of prayer that I have learned? Or does it take special needs to remind me that I have forgotten to talk to God? I think that the busyness of our days causes one to do more “ceasing” than praying. Perhaps Paul is suggesting an attitude of constant communion with our Heavenly Father when he tells the Thessalonians to pray without ceasing.

If you find yourself in the same boat, and your prayers are mostly want-lists (for your own needs and the needs of others), why not look again at the Lord's model prayer and resolve to follow Jesus' suggested order? He taught us to say unto our Father: “Hallowed be Thy name.” Without some serious meditation, we ought not to say these four words. I wish we could hear, in our days, the intonation that Jesus gave to His disciples as He instructed them at this point. I am sure it would make this prayer “come alive” to us, and we would,

in turn, come alive in our own communication with God. One great failing of our prayers today is that we begin to address God too quickly after we have bowed our heads. We should be more God-conscious in this great Christian privilege — prayer.

PROPHECY

Edited by Dr. Horace Wood

World Crisis and Prophetic Truth

Marvin Rosenthal

The year 1979 is tumbling uncontrollably toward its end. For America, it was anything but a good year. Nor does 1980 hold out hope for a new horizon of opportunity and change. America is adrift on a fragile craft in a stormy sea. Find a compass! Lower the sails! Turn the helm! All hands man your battle stations! These should be the commands of the day. They are conspicuous by their absence. Government has lost its credibility. Business has lost its integrity. Hard work has lost its dignity. Morality has lost its nobility. And worst of all, the expression of Christianity, the backbone of our nation, has lost its vitality.

Few believe government — only the naive trust business — people want more and more for doing less and less — ethical standards are no longer fashionable — and a distorted, Madison Avenue-promoted “religious” craze is usurping the simplistic biblical message of salvation by grace through faith in Christ alone.

As a result, political paralysis, economic chaos, military weakness — these are not potential future dangers but present realities.

America has never been a truly Christian nation. However, our beloved country was built upon a Christian world view which, in turn, rested upon biblical principals. These principals have now been eroded or neutralized. The inspired penman asked the rhetorical question, “If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?” (Ps. 11:3). Homosexuality, the ‘so-called’ Equal Rights Amendment, a permissive society, an educational system that says there are no absolutes (because there is no personal God to whom man is responsible), social scientists who claim man is locked in and simply the product of his environment, a judicial system that is often more concerned about the criminal than the society he abuses, the breakdown of the family unit, frothy “religion” without a life-transforming, Holy Spirit-produced relationship with Christ — these are clear, unmistakable indications of the depths to which our country has fallen. We have traded God’s eternal principles for temporal, secular humanism. We have moved into a period when, not unlike the days of the judges of Israel, man is doing that which is “right in his own eyes” (Judges 17:6). And, as in those days the people demanded a king to bring order out of chaos, so too soon the western world will call for a king, a man who, they will think, can break through the red

tape and put a stop to the insanity of the present hour. He will be the Antichrist, and he will plunge the world into its most devastating period of history. Current events are paving the way for his soon coming.

Make no mistake about it, our nation is burning, and our people are fiddling — impotence rules supreme. As a nation, we have lost the will to change the cadence and direction being dictated by the one who is the enemy of our souls. This harsh assessment is, we think, not an overstatement of the present hour.

In the light of these truths, how should we, who are believers in Christ, then live? Should we find a deserted cave and drop out of the human race? Should we take a fatalistic, what's-the-use attitude toward life? Is it okay to espouse the philosophy, "When in Rome, do as the Romans do"? Must our message be one of total despair? The answer to these questions is an unequivocal "No!" We who are in Christ must view our world through the "more sure word of prophecy" (2 Peter 1:19). Only then can we have proper perspective and balance in the midst of a twentieth-century world that has come unzipped and has lost its way. The Apostle Paul's admonition to the believer was never more timely, "And be not conformed to this world. . ." (Romans 12:2).

BIBLICAL PROPHECY IS THE ONLY BASIS FOR HOPE

For many people, 'hope' is simply the balancing of probabilities. A man wants to play golf. He looks out the window and says, "I hope it doesn't rain today" — but he knows it might. A college coed shares a concern with her roommate: "I hope I passed the exam" — but she knows she may have failed it. Sometimes 'hope' is used as a synonym for despair. After visiting a terminally ill patient, a loved one remarks, "All he has left is 'hope.'" That is, everything has been done which can be done, and only a miracle can alter the inevitable march toward death.

In marked contrast, when the Creator of all things extends to mankind a word of 'hope', it is certain, absolute, unalterable, because God's Word of promise is rooted in His arm of power.

Sin had entered front and center onto the stage of human history. Man's image in the likeness of his Creator was marred, his fellowship broken, his right to rule as king of the earth forfeited — he was about to be expelled from the Garden of Eden to start his long, futile walk across the centuries. It was mankind's darkest hour. Every crushed heart, every broken body, every disturbed mind — the collective tears of the human race can trace their roots to the sin of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.

And, in the darkness of that hour, an eternal God who changes not gave to man a word of 'hope'. Like a flaming meteor, it lit up the darkness of night to point to a glorious new day. The 'hope' was couched in the promise that one day a unique personality would appear on the stage of history. He would be human (Gen. 3:15), He would be divine (Isa. 9:6), He would be the God-Man.

His first appearance was for the express purpose of dying for

the world's sin. He did. His second appearance will have as its goal the recapturing of man's lost destiny as king of the earth. He will.

In the interim, God never promised that things would get better and better — as a matter of fact, He said things would get worse as we approach the end of the age. He never promised that all men would be saved — He said it would only be a remnant. From a human perspective, it looks like God is losing the battle. From a divine perspective, we can know that God is going to win the war.

Biblical prophecy is the only basis for hope in this otherwise hopeless world.

BIBLICAL PROPHECY IS AN EXHORTATION TO HOLY LIVING

Following the Second World War, one of the popular songs to emerge began with these words, "In a quaint caravan, there's a lady they call the gypsy. She can look in the future and drive away all your fears . . ." Mankind is naturally curious — it has a penchant to know the future. Some people expend a great deal of time and energy seeking to understand what the Bible has to say about the future with little or no concern for the present. Conversely, some are concerned about present holy living with little interest in what the Bible has to say about the future. The former seem not to understand that God tells us about the future to affect our present, and the latter miss the fact that present victorious living requires an understanding of what God is going to do in the future.

The Apostle Paul, writing to Titus, sets forth two termini points. The first he calls a GRACE appearing of the Lord Jesus (Titus 2:11). The other he calls a GLORIOUS appearing of the Lord Jesus (Titus 2:13). The GRACE appearance looks back in history to our Lord's first advent in humility as a Lamb. The GLORIOUS appearance looks forward prophetically to His second advent in glory as a Lion. Believers of this age are living between those two termini points — the first and second advents of the Son of God. To such, the Apostle Paul gives this admonition: "Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world" (Titus 2:12).

The Bible never suggests that we will change or reform this evil world but that in the light of Christ's soon coming and certain triumph, we are to live victoriously within it.

Biblical prophecy is an exhortation to holy living.

BIBLICAL PROPHECY IS THE SUBSTANTIATION OF CHRIST'S HONOR

One of the strange enigmas of nineteen hundred years of church history is that relatively few theologians have understood the relationship of prophecy to the person and work of the Lord Jesus. The New Testament opens with the declaration, "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham" (Matt. 1:1).

Jesus is the name of God's Son. It literally means "salvation." To Joseph the angelic messenger said, "... call his name JESUS (salvation): for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21).

That is, call Him that which will be characteristic of His life. He will save, so call Him salvation.

Christ is not, as many think, His second or last name. Rather, it should be understood to be an office like president, prime minister or king. The term Christ comes from a Hebrew word meaning "anointed". In the Old Testament there were three official offices — prophet, priest and king. The prophet was God's spokesman to the people, the priest was the people's representative before God, and the king was God's vice-regent ruling over the people in civil affairs. Every need of the human heart could be met through those three offices. To the question, "In this confused, tumbling-out-of-control world in which I live, is there any objective truth in which to trust?" the response given is, "Yes, hear God's Prophet." To the question, "Is there any way that a vile sinner like me can find acceptability before a holy God?" the answer is, "Yes, through God's Priest." To the question, "Will justice, righteousness and peace ever become a reality upon the earth?" the answer is, "Yes, through the divinely-appointed King."

Whenever a man in the Old Testament was appointed to one of these offices, oil was placed on his head — this was called anointing. All three of these offices merged in Jesus the Son of God. He and He alone is Prophet, Priest and King — the Christ (Anointed One). Implicit in that title is the fact that every need of the human heart for time and eternity can be met in Him.

During His first advent He was a prophet — He was God's spokesman to the people. At the end of His life He functioned as priest offering the sacrifice to God and then turning around to be the sacrifice. When Jesus returns to the earth the second time, He will return as the Lion of the tribe of Judah to be King of the Jews and then King of kings and Lord of lords.

Any theology that ignores or distorts a physical, visible, literal return of the Son of God to rule and reign upon the earth ought not to call Jesus "the Christ", for inherent in that designation is His ministry as King. His prophetic ministry was on earth; His priestly ministry now in heaven was begun on earth; and He shall rule as King on the earth. What the first man, Adam, through sin lost, the Second Man, Christ, through righteousness will recapture.

Biblical prophecy is the substantiation of Christ's honor, for it alone explains His coming kingly ministry and justifies His Messianic claim. And, in that coming is the hope of mankind to be realized.

Biblical prophecy is the only genuine corrective to the futility and despair into which our world is being plunged. It offers hope to the hopeless; it provides a rationale for the exhortation to holy living, and it vindicates the person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ.

A diamond shines brightest with a dark velvet background, and the darker the night, the more radiant the glorious Gospel. Child of the King, look out at the world God so loves and share His Son, for the fields are white unto harvest. Citizen of Heaven, look up for your redemption draweth nigh. In Christ, we will soon meet — here, there or in the air.

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Viewing the News

Jack Blaes

THE KENTUCKY SUPREME COURT REFUSES to hear the appeal of the Kentucky Board of Education in its suit against the Kentucky Association of Christian Schools. The issue stemmed from the refusal of the state Board for Elementary and Secondary Education to accredit 20 church-related schools. In some instances, local school boards started truancy proceedings against parents of church school children.

* * * * *

MARVA COLLINS IS MAKING KID'S HEADS BIG.

She runs a private school for some 30 children in an all-black, poverty level area of run down multi-family apartments. Another 400 children are on a waiting list. "Just looking at the faces of children in this area makes one cry," said Mrs. Collins. "They come home at the end of the day with listless expressions and dull eyes. The same children come here with their eyes lit up. They metamorphose before my eyes." Mrs. Collins bases her teaching on one very important basic: reading skills. And her emphasis is unyielding. "If you can't read, you can't do anything else. I don't see why society finds this so difficult to understand. Just about all learning branches from that skill and almost every profession today demands exactness. I don't expect society to educate these children. I refuse all federal funds and accept very few private monies," she said.

* * * * *

JOHN HOLT, EDUCATOR AND AUTHOR OF *How Children Fail*, recently attended a convention of teachers and administrators, and few of them liked what he said. "The future of education in this country lies in pri-

private schools and homes. Public schools are worse than they used to be and getting worse yet. I believe that if not a majority, then a rapidly growing minority, would say that the government should not have an effective monopoly on education. And a smaller group would believe that government shouldn't be in education at all." Holt depicted public education's future as one of falling income, fewer pupils, continuing problems of dropping out, violence, vandalism, and most importantly, America's plummeting faith in government.

* * * * *

JUST WHY DO WE NEED A CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT?

The 14th Amendment says: No state shall deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.

A proposed, so-called equal rights amendment says: Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex.

Doesn't the constitution state that all persons have equal rights under the law? But maybe persons does not mean what it has always meant.

* * * * *

AND WHAT WERE THE CONCERNS OF THE FIFTH ALL-CHRISTIAN PEACE CONGRESS?

Well, to begin with, the spreading of Christ's Gospel wasn't one of them. The congress paid particular attention to a letter from Mr. Kosygin (an atheist) which asked the gathering to put its whole weight behind the fight against the armaments race and to unify all the peace forces in the case of the growing activities of warmongers capable of forcing a military catastrophe

upon humanity for their egotistic interests. Kosygin's "peace forces" are the World Council of Churches and the various agencies and organizations spawned at previous meetings, conferences, congresses, and committee meetings held in various parts of the world and dominated by the KGB-trained priesthood within the Soviet Union. His "warmongers" are NATO, the Pentagon, the U.S. businesses who have anything to do with providing armaments and sophisticated technology that might make it harder for the Soviets to take over the world.

The principal theme of the Congress was "God's Appeal for Solidarity, Christians for Justice, Liberation and Peace." Interpret: God's appeal for solidarity is that every Christian should join the ecumenical movement and send support for the terrorists who are killing missionaries and their families. Justice means that all people should have a share in the production of all labor whether they labor or not with the Marxists doing the apportioning at the point of a gun. Liberation calls for a revolution which by intrigue, infiltration, or violence will bring about the downfall of all systems based upon the idea of free enterprise. Peace is that utopian state that should result from the achievement of the Marxist dream. No other peace is a "just peace".

Met without dissent were Kosygin's remarks: "The USSR and other socialist countries are doing everything to avert the threat of war." Of course, obedient children do not dissent their master's voice. Neither did the Christian forces assembled protest about the recent massacre of missionaries and their families in Rhodesia, close to the borders of Mozambique, a country particularly lauded by the delegates. Of no concern either were priests and other religious orders in the USSR, Czechoslovakia, or Ethiopia languishing in filthy Communist prisons.

PORNOGRAPHY IN THE UNITED STATES does at least a \$4 billion a year business. Two million people (adults?) visit pornographic film showings every week. CBS owns a skin magazine called High Society. That news company is not likely to be responsible to uncover any connections with organized crime the porn indus-

try has. Don't hold your breath until it is a subject on "60 Minutes".

I HEARTILY COMMEND the Joelton Church of Christ of Joelton, TN for its leadership in the "CLEAN UP TV" campaign. TV pornography was not even alluded to in the item above, and this is what the "Clean up TV" campaign is all about. It offers complainants an opportunity to become doers if they wish to. And it will only get worse unless something is done. This campaign takes the issue right to the source, the money suppliers, or the sponsors. It tells them that we are tired of giving them our money to support degrading programs. So, you see, it is really we who support those objectionable programs by purchasing products of the sponsors. It is a very reasonable campaign, but it calls for mass participation. At last report over 1,200 congregations are committed. If you or your congregation has not made a commitment, write now for materials to join this worthwhile effort. Write: JOELTON CHURCH OF CHRIST, P. O. Box 218, Joelton, TN. 37080.

TOM ANDERSON SAYS: "Louder than the noise of the bad people is the silence of the 'good people'. Many 'good people' are mainly concerned with how to stay awake on a full stomach. As General Van Horn Moseley said, 'Those who have the most to lose will be the last to resist.'"

Thank you for many encouraging words, and thoughtful clippings, etc. I hope you will not become discouraged with the news. We must keep our eyes on Jesus. . . "the Author and Finisher of our faith." He will achieve His high purpose and end. And in the glorious end, the believer's destiny is to be remade in His image and likeness. May every day of your life find you growing in His grace, bringing praises to His name.



Ernest Lyon is a professor of music at the University of Louisville, and an elder and minister of the Highland Church of Christ in Louisville.



THOUGHTS FROM ROMANS

Ernest E. Lyon

GOD'S JUDGMENT: ACCORDING TO WORKS

Last month we thought together for a little while about the judgment of works that would result from the life choice of rejecting Christ. This month let us re-read Romans two, verses six, seven, and ten to think for a little while about the side of judgment that appeals to God—the giving of rewards to those who receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

This whole passage is too often misunderstood by those who read it without any reference to other passages that show that God does not give out rewards described here on account of their works. In Romans 4:5, for example, Paul will speak of “him that worketh reckoned for righteousness.” Paul is not denying that teaching in this passage, but is pointing out the different results that come from a different life-choice. Those who choose to follow God in Christ will “by patient continuance in well-doing seek glory and honor and incorruption” and to such God will render eternal life. There is no thought here of earning eternal life by doing good but rather of God sharing His life with those who come to Him as He directs.

The “glory and honor and incorruption” in verse seven are not glory and honor before men resulting in having a life that will not be corruptible. God has called us to His glory and the true seeker after God wants only glory from Him. Honor among men is not anything to be sought at all but the praise and approbation of God is the intense desire of all who know Him in Christ. And incorruption, of course, comes only to those who have the incorruptible life of Jesus Christ.

Maybe this passage can be understood better if you will think for a moment of the reply of Jesus to the rich young ruler who asked Him, “What good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?” Jesus replied, “If thou wouldest enter into life, keep the commandments” and then stated some of the ten commandments when the young man asked which ones He meant. When he then replied that he had kept these from his youth up Jesus did not argue the point with him, though He could have pointed out many times that the young man’s life had been contrary to those commandments. Instead He pointed out to him the thing that kept him from eternal

life, his preference for the things of this world over the things from God. His riches meant more to him than glory and honor and incorruption. In his own strength, regardless of how high his moral standards were he could not "by patience in well-doing" seek for these things from God, for his roots were in other things.

Likewise, when we come to verse ten, the terms of getting (note the slight change of wording here) "glory and honor and peace" is that of "working good". No good can come from corruption, no spiritual results can come from the workings of the flesh. But when any man, either Jew or Gentile, comes to God through Jesus Christ, his life will now bear the fruit of the Spirit and he will be able to "work good" and will receive the state of blessedness (glory) that God will give and will receive the praise and approbation of God (honor) and will receive a state of confirmed joy and prosperity (peace) that can come only from God.

Reader, what is the direction of your life? Are you working with your natural powers vainly thinking that you might in some way please God and earn the right to eternal life? Just take an honest look at yourself and your works and you will see how impossible that is, something that Paul is trying here to convince you of. Paul reserves to the third chapter, starting with verse 21, the full statement of the grace of God that provides these things. But unless he can first convince you that there is no hope in yourself, he knows that he can not bring you to the one source of eternal life, of salvation, of all the good that God wants to bestow on you. Make the right life choice by coming to God for the salvation He provided when He made Christ "to be sin on our behalf that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Corinthians 5:21). There is no other way to eternal life.

Carl Kitzmiller is minister of the Oakdale, Louisiana Church of Christ and writes the Sunday school lessons for Word and Work Lesson Quarterly.



Questions Asked of Us

Carl Kitzmiller

God created the world and then rested. How do we know He is not still "resting" and that the great events attributed to Him since are not merely natural phenomena?

If I understand the idea being expressed here, it is that possibly God created the world and set it going, much as a man might make a clock and wind it up, and that since the creation He does not bother

with or interfere in what happens. In other words, God is in His heaven and is not troubling Himself about what is happening in the world.

This is not a new idea at all. Deism was prevalent in England during the 17th and 18th centuries. Deism is a type of rationalism which affirms naturalism, i.e., that the universe is to be explained wholly in physical and chemical terms. Some of the notables in early America were Deists. One suspects that many present day liberals or modernists would affirm that God does not in any way interfere in His creation to set aside or change the operation of natural events. By some, God is seen as an impersonal Being or Force that may be necessary for creation but One who shows no interest in its operation.

We have one source, and only one, for any authoritative declaration as to what God has done, is now doing, or will do. That source, of course, is the Bible. I may see events which suggest to me that God's hand is in them, but this is my opinion. Man may misinterpret the events of nature. But if God has been active in the affairs of the world during recorded Bible history and there is no reason given as to why He is not active now, then I am on pretty solid ground in supposing that He is active now. Those who reject the Bible as God's word may need to dig into the question: "Is the Bible true?" We are giving answer here, however, from the viewpoint that the Bible is true, inspired, thoroughly reliable, and able to stand any honest investigation.

First of all, it appears to be true that God did do a great act of creating the heavens and the earth and then stopped, no longer creating (bringing into existence from nothing) more planets, stars, etc. In Genesis 2:1 we read: "And the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them." I take this to mean that the initial work was finished and that such creation is not a constantly continuing process. This does not say He will never destroy that creation and make a new one, or refashion and refurbish the old one. In fact, the Bible speaks of the destruction of the present heavens and earth (2 Pet. 3:10) and of new heavens and a new earth (Rev. 21:1). It is not clear whether this will be creation in the fullest sense or the restructuring of the old, but it is clear that God will do it and, thus, that He will intervene in the operation of His creation.

We can go back into the past and soon discover that He has intervened. Whatever natural explanation men may try to give for the flood (Gen. 6, etc.), the Bible declares it to be an act of God: "I will destroy them with the earth" (Gen. 6:13), and "I, behold, I do bring the flood of waters upon the earth" (Gen. 6:17).

The Bible is full of God's dealings with men. In Eden He challenged sin and intervened to drive man from the garden, an event that fully changed the course of human history from that point on. Moreover, there are many examples of His calling men, sending them on a given work, revealing Himself first to the patriarchs and then through the prophets and apostles. In the O. T. we have miracles

that were performed by His power, changing national histories. In the book of Daniel (ch. 4) we learn that He rules in the kingdom of men and gives power to whom He chooses. This is no picture of God sitting idly by without interest or participation in the affairs of earth.

The whole of the O. T. is the story of His bringing the Messiah into the world – certainly an event that has had great effect on human history. The miracle of the resurrection of Christ was the hand of God in human affairs. Christ is building the church, a continuing process until the church is completed. The Holy Spirit must operate in every new birth and in the Christian life. The miraculous gifts of the Spirit were conferred on men as the Spirit chose (1 Cor. 12:11) and are not to be explained as the mere operation of natural law or human undertaking.

In Colossians 1:17 is a short and easily missed declaration that “in Him (Christ) all things consist.” A footnote in the American Standard version gives an alternate reading, “hold together.” This is simply a declaration that it is the power of Christ that holds together the universe, the creation. The verb speaks of a continuing action – not merely a past activity but a continuing one. Rather than being like a wound-up clock set running by its maker, the universe is continually watched over and kept working harmoniously by its Creator. Without His power it could only fly apart, as a runaway machine of some sort.

We have touched already on the fact that the Bible foresees God’s active intervention in human affairs and the events of heaven and earth in connection with the second coming of Christ and the end of the age.

If we believe the Bible (and we repeat that our purpose here is not to debate that issue), then we must recognize that God is active in human events. Without the providential overruling of God how can it be declared in truth that “all things work together for good” to the Christian? God rested from creation, and there is no statement as to when or if He has resumed that specific kind of activity, but He is not resting in the sense of allowing only certain impersonal “laws” to determine what happens in the world. We do not deny that there are natural laws that can be discerned in the creation of God, nor that He uses them, but we deny that He uses them only or that He will not or cannot set them aside when it suits His purpose to do so. God is sovereign, and He can create when and as He chooses. Possibly most, if not all, of what we have mentioned can be explained as His governing, controlling, or using what He has already brought into existence from nothing, so that actual creation is not necessary. On the other hand, the miracles such as the feeding of the multitudes (e.g., Matt. 14:15-21) seem to suggest that He is still in the creating business when He needs to be.

When was the book of Job written? Where is Uz?

Like several books of our Bible, the book of Job contains no dating information such as who was ruling or what datable events hap-

pened. Its message is timeless, of course, and is not affected by a lack of date. An effort to determine any kind of date is probably more for the satisfaction of human curiosity than anything else.

There are Bible students who believe the book of Job to be the oldest book of our Bible from the standpoint of its actual composition or writing. Moses wrote of earlier events, but Moses wrote sometime close to the giving of the law and the establishment of the priesthood. The book of Job mentions no priesthood and shows Job offering sacrifices in the way that would have been done in the days of the patriarchs, when the fathers or heads of families built altars and offered sacrifices. The Sabeans and the Chaldeans, who are mentioned, can not be sufficiently isolated to one period of time so as to get much help from this source. Every indication is that we are dealing with a man who lived before the law of Moses was in force.

Uz was apparently located in or near Edom(See Lam. 4:21). *Unger's Bible Dictionary* reports that Ptolemy said the Uzzites dwelt in the Arabian desert, west of Babylon, and adjacent to the Edomites of Mt. Seir. A more exact location of Uz does not seem possible with our present knowledge. Some Bible lands maps will show Uz in its estimated position.

113 N. 6th St., Oakdale, LA 71463



"Is the Church the Kingdom?"

Dr. David R. Reagan

(Editor's Note: This is the third in a series of five articles being written by Dr. Reagan in response to an attack on Pre-Millennialism by Guy N. Woods, the Associate Editor of the *Gospel Advocate*.)

The third point which Bro. Guy N. Woods made in his attack on Pre Millennialism was worded as follows: "The Lord is not coming back to establish a kingdom because the kingdom was established in the First Century, and that is the only kingdom that will ever exist on earth."

The only unusual aspect about Bro. Woods' whole attack is that he put this argument third instead of first. The argument that "the church is the kingdom, and therefore there is no future kingdom" is the cornerstone argument of Church of Christ A-Millennialists. It is usually accompanied with wild assertions that "Pre-Mills do not believe in the church," or "Pre-Mills degrade the importance of the church," or "Pre-Mills believe that Jesus failed in His mission."

AN IRRELEVANT ARGUMENT

All of this is really ridiculous, because the argument that the kingdom is the church completely misses the point of Pre-Millennialism. I do not know a single Church of Christ Pre-Mill who would deny that the church is the current manifestation of God's kingdom upon the earth. Let me say that again in a different way: *Every Pre-Mill I know among the Churches of Christ would agree that the church is the kingdom.* Despite all the propaganda to the contrary, Church of Christ Pre-Mills do not deny that Jesus is currently reigning in glory over His kingdom, the church.

Now, there are some Pre-Mills, known as Dispensationalists, who do make a distinction between the kingdom and the church. But I have never encountered one of these among the churches of Christ. Thus, when a person attacks Church of Christ Pre-Mills by asserting that they deny the church is the kingdom, the person either doesn't know what he is talking about or else he is trying to confuse the issue.

DIVERSITY AMONG PRE-MILLS

The thing to be kept in mind here is that there are Pre-Mills and there are Pre-Mills. In other words, Pre-Millennialism is not a monolithic doctrine. All Pre-Mills believe that Jesus is coming back to this earth to establish a kingdom, but beyond that basic belief, they differ widely. Likewise, all Christians believe that Jesus is Lord, but beyond that basic belief, they agree on very little. To attack the validity of Pre-Millennialism by asserting that Pre-Mills are wrong because they believe the church is not the kingdom is equivalent to attacking the validity of Christianity by asserting that Christians are wrong because they believe in the infallibility of the Pope! I am a Christian, but I do not believe in the infallibility of the Pope. I am a Pre-Millennialist, but I do not believe in the doctrine that the church and the kingdom are distinctive entities.

But sometimes there is just no way to win this point. I say this because when I labor mightily to stress that all Pre-Mills do not believe the same things, I am often confronted with the counter-argument that the disagreement which exists among Pre-Mills is proof positive that Pre-Millennialism is wrong! The fallacy of this kind of thinking can be illustrated decisively by pointing out that the same argument could be applied to Christianity as a whole — that is, Christianity is invalid because Christians disagree! This, of course, is sheer nonsense.

It should be kept in mind, too, that A-Mills disagree strongly with each other. Some spiritualize the kingdom completely while others materialize it in the church. Some take a Preterist view of the Book of Revelation while others take either an idealist view or an historical view.

THE A-MILL CONTENTION

Thankfully, Bro. Woods was more responsible than most Church of Christ critics of Pre-Millennialism when he made the point about

the church and the kingdom. He simply asserted that the kingdom was established in the First Century in the form of the church and that the church is the only kingdom which Christ will ever have on this earth. He then proceeded to present rather elaborate scriptural proof of his assertion.

- 1) He pointed to scriptures like Acts 2:30 to establish the fact that Jesus is currently reigning.
- 2) He referred to scriptures like Matt. 10:7 to illustrate that Jesus taught the kingdom was "near" or "at hand."
- 3) He used Matt. 16:18, 19 to prove that Jesus used the words "church" and "kingdom" interchangeably.
- 4) He utilized scriptures like Rev. 1:9 and Heb. 12:28 to emphasize that the kingdom is a present reality.

THE DIVERSITY OF THE KINGDOM CONCEPT

All I can say in response to these scriptural references is "Amen." I agree that they prove the church is the current manifestation of God's kingdom in the world. But to say that the kingdom is the church is not the same as saying that the kingdom is *only* the church. The scriptures clearly teach that the church is the kingdom. They do not teach that the kingdom is only the church.

Consider these references to the kingdom in scripture:

- 1) The kingdom is identified with the creation itself, for God is sovereign over the creation. See Ps. 93:1, 2 and 1 Chron. 29:11.
- 2) The kingdom is expressed in the nation of Israel. See Exodus 19:6 and 1 Sam. 8:7.
- 3) The kingdom is equated with the church. See Col. 1:13 and Rev. 1:9.
- 4) The kingdom is viewed as something more than the church, yet to come in the future. See Matt. 8:11, Luke 22:28-30, Acts 14:22, 1 Cor. 6:9, and 2 Peter 1:11.
- 5) The kingdom is yet future, to take the form of a reign of Christ and His saints upon the earth. See Rev. 3:21, Daniel 7:27, 2 Tim. 2:12, and Rev. 20:6.
- 6) The kingdom is yet future, to take the form ultimately of a reign of God over the redeemed upon a new earth. See 1 Cor. 15:24-28 and Rev. 21:1-4.

THE UNITY OF THE KINGDOM CONCEPT

I believe these scriptures teach that God has always had a kingdom upon this earth, but it has been manifested in different ways. The kingdom was originally expressed in the creation itself, in its perfect obedience to God's will. With the corruption of the creation through the sin of man, the kingdom was expressed in the lives of those who responded obediently in faith to God's will. The kingdom became focused in a more tangible manner after the call of Abraham

and the emergence of the nation of Israel. Since Pentecost, the kingdom has been expressed in the institution of the church. But the Bible promises different expressions of the kingdom in the future — first, in the form of a thousand year rule of Christ upon this earth, and second, in the form of an eternal rule of God upon a new earth.

Notice that the progression here is both circular and expansive. It is circular in that it begins and ends with the reign of God over a creation that is in perfect submission. It is expansive in that after the Fall it constantly expands in scope from a few patriarchs and their families, to the nation of Israel, to the church, and finally to all nations of the world.

The kingdom is thus past, present, and future. It is currently expressed in the church, but it is like a rose in the bud, yet to bloom in its full glory. The kingdom has always been coming, and it will continue to come until God's will is done perfectly. Even during the millennial rule of Christ the kingdom will be coming, for the Bible teaches that rebellion will be lurking in the hearts of men. The consummation of the kingdom will not come until all enemies of God have been subdued. That will occur at the end of the millennial reign of Christ (Rev. 20:7-15) at which time He will surrender the kingdom to His Father, and God Himself will reign forever over a redeemed creation (Rom. 8:18-23 and 1 Cor. 15:24-28).

JESUS AND THE KINGDOM

This concept of the progressive unfolding of the kingdom was taught by Jesus in the parable in which He compared the kingdom of God to the growth of grain, stating "the earth produces of itself, first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear" (Mark 4:26-29). Jesus also expressed the progressive coming of the kingdom in the prayer He taught His disciples to pray when He said: "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6:10). This is a clear expression of Hebrew parallelism, a poetic form in which the first statement is refined and defined by the second. Thus, to pray "Thy kingdom come" is to pray "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." How tragic it is that the mainline Churches of Christ have taught their members for years that it is wrong to pray this beautiful prayer because the kingdom has "already come."

The ultimate truth about the concept of the kingdom is that Jesus Himself was the incarnation of all that the concept represents, for He obeyed God perfectly in all things (Heb. 5:8, 9).

ANSWERING THE QUESTION

Is the church the kingdom? Yes and no. Yes, it is the Lord's kingdom in the world today. No, it is not the full expression of the kingdom. The kingdom is present and yet still coming. Let us pray for its more glorious expression by joining the Apostle John in his prayer: "Come, Lord Jesus. Come quickly!"

(You may respond to this article by writing Dr. Reagan at Phillips University, Enid, Oklahoma 73701.)

Ernest O. Mengelberg is an elder of the Portland Avenue Church in Louisville.

1952

In Defense of The Pre-tribulation Rapture

Ernest O. Mengelberg

I want to write this little article in defense of the pre-tribulation coming of Christ to catch up the church (the rapture). Some think that the church will go through the tribulation. Let's consider Revelation 4:1-4. John saw a door open in heaven. He saw 24 elders sitting on thrones arrayed in white garments and on their heads crowns of gold. The church is not spoken of any more in Revelation after the fourth chapter. Everything is future after the fourth chapter. The church is spoken of 14 times in the first three chapters of Revelation but not again after the fourth chapter.

The church today is looking for Jesus to come at any time (1 Thess. 4:13-18). We are told to be patient until the coming of the Lord (James 5:8) and wait for His Son from heaven. Post-tribulationists must deny the teaching of the imminency of the Lord's coming at any time, as a thief (Matt. 24:43, 44). Therefore be ye ready, in an hour that you think not the Son of man cometh. Imminent means it may happen at any time, not necessarily immediately. Whether it is immediately or later is not designated. Christ's coming must always be imminent (Matt. 24:42-50). It shows it may be a short time or a long time (Matt. 25:19; Mark 13:33-37).

The church was a mystery. It was not known in Old Testament times. It was not mentioned in the 69 weeks of years of Daniel or in the 70th week of Jacob's trouble, the tribulation. It is composed of Jews and Gentiles. In Acts 15:14 God visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name. Between the 69th and 70th week we would call it "time out" as in a basketball game; stop the clock, for God to bring in the Church and when the church is taken up God begins to deal with the Jews again.

The rapture is the "blessed hope". It insures comfort (1 Thess. 4:18). The glorious appearing is when He comes with His saints for judgment (Jude 14; Titus 2:13; Rev. 3:10). The church is saved from the hour of trial, not through the hour of trial. He could have said "in" if he wanted to mean through the hour of trial. Some say the word "from" should be "through". J. B. Pentecost quotes Thayer, Alford, Elliott, Montgomery, the greatest Greek scholars, saying, "immunity from". The Greek word "ek" means out of or from. It means exemption from. Deliver us from the wrath to come. We are not appointed unto wrath but unto the obtaining of salvation (1 Thess. 5:9). The wrath of God is described in Revelation 6:12; 11:18; 14:10; 15:1; 16:1-9.

Lot is a type of the rapture. The angel said, "Hasten, depart hither; I cannot do anything until thou come hither (Gen. 19:22; 2 Peter 2:6-9).

Revelation 3:10 speaks of earth dwellers, permanent occupants. We are not permanent occupants; we are pilgrims and strangers. Our citizenship is in heaven. We are sealed by the Holy Spirit, our down

payment on our salvation. Our names are written in heaven but Jesus will bring salvation when He comes.

The church will be rewarded at the judgment seat of Christ (2 Cor. 5:10). "Behold, I come quickly and my reward is with me to render to every man as his work is" (Rev. 22:12). Coming quickly means in the twinkling of an eye (1 Cor. 15:52). All judgment is given to Christ (John 5:22; 2 Cor. 5:10) We must all be made manifest before the judgment seat of Christ that each one may receive the things done in the body, whether it is good or bad.

The judgment cannot take place before the Lamb opens the book of seven seals. When the seals are broken, trouble begins to happen on earth. The church is in heaven, represented by the elders in white garments. "And it was given unto her that she should array herself in fine linen, bright and pure, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. And the armies which are in heaven followed him upon white horses clothed in fine linen white and pure" (Rev. 19:14). This shows that the church has already been rewarded and clothed in fine linen. Compare Revelation 4:4 and see that they are the same ones in white linen with crowns on their heads. Compare Jude 14, coming with His saints, or holy ones.

Some think that we should prepare for the tribulation. This puts a wet blanket on our hope. "Every one that hath this hope set on him purifieth himself even as he is pure" (1 John 3:3).

There is not much hope in knowing that we must go through the tribulation. There is no comfort in that. Compare 1 Thess. 4:18. Wherefore comfort one another with these words. Also compare 1 Thess. 4:13-18.

No saint will be crowned in heaven until the apostle Paul receives his crown (2 Tim. 4:8). For henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge shall give to me at that day and not to me only, but to all them that love His appearing. Behold, I come quickly. Who is this righteous judge? The Lord at the judgment seat of Christ. The rewards follow the rapture of the church. The rewards are associated with judgment and must be a part of the program (Luke 14:14).

Let's consider now 2 Thess. 2:2, touching the coming of our Lord Jesus and our gathering together unto Him, not to be quickly shaken from your mind that the day of the Lord is already present. Let no man beguile you in any wise. Except the falling away come first and the man of sin be revealed and sets himself up for worship. We are told about these things, how the lawless one will be revealed in his own season; only there is one that restraineth now, until he be taken out of the way. The church will not be here to see the antichrist. We are now seeing the falling away. After the one who restraineth, the Holy Spirit, is taken out of the way then the antichrist will be revealed. The word then shows that the antichrist will be revealed at this time. Governments do not have the power to restrain the antichrist in his supernatural power. When the antichrist is revealed the government is in line for him to take over. The professing church (ecumenical

counsel of churches) is in line to take over and ride the beast until he destroys her and sets himself up for worship.

Some say we ought not to look too much to men for what they say about prophecy. Have we figured out by ourselves the prophetic word without some help from teachers? I know I would not have any knowledge of prophecy if I had never gotten acquainted with Bro. Boll. I want to be like Bereans who searched the scriptures to see if these things were so (Acts 17:10, 11).

Let's Cultivate Simplicity and Solitude

by A. W. Tozer

We Christians must simplify our lives or lose untold treasures on earth and in eternity.

Modern civilization is so complex as to make the devotional life all but impossible. It wears us out by multiplying distractions and beats us down by destroying our solitude, where otherwise we might renew our strength before going out to face the world again.

"The thoughtful soul to solitude retires," said the poet of other and quieter times; but where is the solitude to which we can retire today? Science, which has provided men with certain material comforts, has robbed them of their souls by surrounding them with a world hostile to their existence. "Commune with your own heart upon your bed and be still" (Psa. 4:4) is a wise and healing counsel, but how can it be followed in this day of the newspaper, the telephone, the radio and the television? These modern playthings, like pet tiger cubs, have grown so large and dangerous that they threaten to devour us all. What was intended to be a blessing has become a positive curse. No spot is now safe from the world's intrusion.

One way the civilized world destroys men is by preventing them from thinking their own thoughts.

Our "vastly improved methods of communication" of which the shortsighted boast so loudly now enable a few men in strategic centers to feed into millions of minds alien thought stuff, ready-made and pre-digested. A little effortless assimilation of these borrowed ideas and the average man has done all the thinking he will or can do. This subtle brainwashing goes on day after day and year after year to the eternal injury of the populace—a populace, incidently, which is willing to pay big money to have the job done, the reason being, I suppose, that it relieves them of the arduous and often frightening task of reaching independent decisions for which they must take responsibility.

There was a time, not too long ago, when a man's home was his castle, a sure retreat to which he might return for quietness and solitude. There "the rains of heaven may blow in, but the king himself cannot enter without permission," said the proud British, and made good on their boast. That was home indeed.

While it is scarcely within the scope of the present piece, I cannot refrain from remarking that the most ominous sign of the coming destruction of our country is the passing of the American home. Americans live no longer in homes, but in theaters. The members of many families hardly know each other, and the face of some popular TV star is to many wives as familiar as that of their husbands. Let no one smile. Rather should we weep at the portent. It will do no good to wrap ourselves in the Stars and Stripes for protection. No nation can long endure whose people have sold themselves for bread and circuses. Our fathers sleep soundly, and the harsh bedlam of commercialized noise that engulfs us like something from Dante's *Inferno* cannot disturb their slumber. They left us a goodly heritage. To preserve that heritage we must have a national character as strong as theirs. And this can be developed only in the Christian home.

The need for solitude and quietness was never greater than it is today. What the world will do about it is their problem. Apparently the masses want it the way it is and the majority of Christians are so completely conformed to this present age that they, too, want things the way they are. They may be annoyed a bit by the clamor and the goldfish bowl existence they live, but apparently they are not annoyed enough to do anything about it. However, there are a few of God's children who have had enough. They want to relearn the ways of solitude and simplicity and gain the infinite riches of the interior life. They want to discover the blessedness of what Dr. Max Reich called "spiritual aloneness." To such I offer a brief paragraph of counsel.

Retire from the world each day to some private spot, even if it be only the bedroom (for a while I retreated to the furnace room for want of a better place). Stay in the secret place till the surrounding noises begin to fade out of your heart and a sense of God's presence envelops you. Deliberately tune out the unpleasant sounds and come out of your closet determined not to hear them. Listen for the inward Voice till you learn to recognize it. Stop trying to compete with others. Give yourself to God and then be what and who you are without regard to what others think. Reduce your interests to a few. Don't try to know what will be of no service to you. Avoid the digest type of mind—short bits of unrelated facts, cute stories and bright sayings. Learn to pray inwardly every moment. After a while you can do this even while you work. Practice candor, childlike honesty, humility. Pray for a single eye. Read less, but read more of what is important to your inner life. Never let your mind remain scattered for very long. Call home your roving thoughts. Gaze on Christ with the eyes of your soul. Practice spiritual concentration.

All the above is contingent upon a right relation to God through Christ and daily meditation on the Scriptures. Lacking these, nothing will help us. Granted these, the discipline recommended will go far to neutralize the evil effects of externalism and to make us acquainted with God and our own souls.

—from *Of God and Men*

AT BILL AND BETTY'S

WELCOME ON THE MAT

Sally Webber came home to visit her parents at Christmas. She came to the Christmas Day service and it was lovely to see her again. Her little boy had grown tremendously and she is expecting another baby in June. I asked her how she was getting on in Bristol.

"We've settled down very well," she told me, "And the church is very friendly. They recognized we were new the very first Sunday we went there, and I was introduced to the leader of the Young Wives Group who was ever so nice. She asked us round to tea the following week to meet another couple who had a little boy about the same age as Tim—so we got to know people very quickly."

"I'm glad everything turned out so well," I said, "I can remember you asking me what I thought about guidance when you were house-hunting, and whether you had chosen the right home."

"I've got no doubt about that now," Sally said happily. "We're going to have House-meeting groups in the weeks leading up to Easter. I do hope everything goes off all right."

"I'm sure it will, Sally," I said, "And it's good to know you're so happy."

During lunch time I was talking to the family about Sally and telling them how happily she had settled down.

"I can't see anyone making all that fuss if someone new came to our church," Janet said a little bitterly. (She's got a bit cynical since she's been engaged to David and seems to take a funny kind of pleasure in picking holes in the church.)

"Oh, I don't know," Bill said tolerantly. "The Minister always keeps a look out for new faces when he's standing at the door. You must give him his due."

"Yes, and while he's standing gossiping to one person half a dozen others slip past," Janet insisted. "That's what happened when I took David. He might have been invisible for all anyone cared."

I hadn't realised that Janet had persuaded David to go to church until then, and I was sorry that he hadn't found it a more friendly and welcoming place. (David isn't a Christian and hasn't got much time for church going, although he hasn't tried to stop Janet going—I must say that.)

"Well, you can't leave it all to the Minister," Pat said sensibly. "He can't talk to everyone at once. Why didn't you introduce David yourself? You know enough people."

"When I want your opinion I'll ask for it," Janet said sharply, adopting the older sister attitude that she knows always infuriates Pat.

"Keep your hair on," Peter said, presumably trying to pour oil on troubled waters, but not succeeding particularly well.

"That will do," Bill said warningly, helping himself to another roast potato before the twins could scoff the lot.

"It's so important for churches to be friendly places," I insisted. "After all, you never know how many people have come into a par-

ticular church for the first time. If they go in and out and nobody speaks to them it may be the last time they'll try it."

"But what can you do?" Bill wanted to know. After the service everyone wants to get home to their dinner. And anyway, you can't charge up to perfect strangers and start talking to them out of the blue."

"I don't see why not," I said. "And people don't mind staying gossiping to their friends outside—that takes just as much time as speaking to strangers."

"Not everyone likes being noticed," Janet said, perversely taking the other side of the argument. "It might embarrass them."

"It would be worth taking the risk," I said.

"Well, why don't you try it?" Bill asked. "Go up to someone new next week and introduce yourself and see what happens."

"I don't know why everyone is always so quick to push things off on me," I said, "Why have I got to be the guinea pig who risks getting snubbed?"

"Well, it was your idea," Paul pointed out.

"You can make it your New Year's resolution," Peter backed him up, getting a dig in at me at the same time. I'm always trying to persuade the family to make New Year's resolutions—but without much success.

"All right, I will," I said defiantly. "Better late than never. I'll pick someone who I don't know next week and go and speak to them."

Actually I had forgotten all about the matter by the following Sunday, but the family hadn't and while we were waiting for the first hymn there was a lot of whispering and giggling at the other end of the bench, which I tried to shush with one of my disciplinary frowns.

"Don't forget your New Year's resolution," Pat hissed, "The boys are having a bet on who you'll choose."

"You know I don't approve of betting," I hissed back crossly, "And don't be so irreverent."

It was funny the way it worked out, because I noticed this new couple sitting on the opposite side of the aisle to us and they'd got another girl of about twenty with them. At the end of the service I put up a quick prayer for courage and the right words to say, and then went over to speak to them. The family watched me from a safe distance with broad grins on their faces.

It turned out that it was the first time the couple had been to our church, as they had just moved into the area, and seemed so pleased when I spoke to them, and introduced them to Bill. I asked the girl to Wives' Group on Thursday, and as it happened I'd got a program in my bag, which looked most efficient. She came too—and told me that her sister, who was a nurse in London, had been most impressed with our friendliness, and said if more churches were like that more people would go. I felt on top of the world, and even the family were dumb-struck for once when I told them what had happened.

Now I try to speak to someone I don't know every week. Of course I don't always hit the jackpot as I did the first time. Sometimes people are just paying us an odd visit because they are staying with relatives, and sometimes I think someone is new when really

they've been coming on and off for years!

I don't always find it easy either. I don't think that making the first move to talk to strangers ever is. And it takes a bit of time too. I miss my friendly gossip with the people I know. I always liked that best because talking to them didn't involve any effort.

I'm trying to get one or two other people interested in the idea. I feel if everybody did it, we'd soon have the reputation of being the friendliest church in town.

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Missionary Messenger

"Greater things for God"

J. R. Stewart-Brown

Cape Town, South Africa

December 5th

We at Bellville Church of Christ have had several families return to the congregation recently. One family is moving back to Cape Town at the end of this year. They have already rented a house near the church building. It's wonderful to have them all back again. Another couple sees prospects of starting a small congregation shortly, and we pray that their efforts will be blessed.

We have a church in Vendeland (an African independent state); the preacher there is Samson Ramulumisi, whom we at Bellville help to support. This has been a most rewarding effort. Some time ago, the members at Bellville sent them a number of Bibles. We also send them old clothes, which are very much appreciated. Our prayers go out to them that they will stay faithful till Jesus comes.

Goodwood Church is having a week of services every night this week. Goodwood is one of our northern suburbs not far from Bellville church. We pray for God to bless these meetings.

Delores Harris

Salisbury, Zimbabwe-Rhodesia

December 20th

The children are on holiday at this time. Seven, so far, have gone home with their mothers for Christmas holidays.

Donald has been working on two cars and has them almost finished. I have started painting the shelves in the kitchen and put the undercoat on today. One of our older boys has been working on bicycles and we have sold quite a few for Christmas.

The court appeal will not be heard until February 15. We do need your prayers on this matter. May God be with you in this coming year.

GLEANINGS

Compiled by Larry Miles

The True Lesson

"Unless what we learn of prophecy, of the Lord's coming, of the age to come, as well as any other truth, makes us more humble, more obedient, more loving and Christ-like, we have indeed learned in vain."

—R. H. Boll

Beginning With Romans

"When I became a Christian, reasoning I should begin with the epistles, I rolled up my sleeves and went to work on Romans. I had not gone far until I found myself just reading words. I leaned back in my chair and thought, 'Will I ever get anything out of Roman?' The redeeming feature of my experience lay in the fact that I kept on studying. When I saw Romans it opened up to me all at once. If Romans puzzles you, puzzle over it. If you get Romans, God will get you."

—R. H. Boll

The Adversary

"The Adversary is very much opposed to your giving thought or consideration to eternity. He wants you to think in terms of this world, as though you are to live forever in your present state. He is very well pleased with the 'earth dwellers,' but he is a constant adversary to the sojourners and pilgrims."

—Ivy J. Istre

in the Friendly Visitor.

How To Read The Bible

Read the Bible, not as a newspaper, but as a home letter.

If a cluster of Heavenly fruit hangs within reach, gather it.

If a promise lies upon the page as a blank check, cash it.

If a prayer is recorded, appropriate it, and launch it as a feathered arrow from the bow of your desire.

If an example of holiness gleams before you, ask God to do as much for you.

If the truth is revealed in all its intrinsic splendor, entreat that its brilliance may ever irradiate the hemisphere of your life.

—F. B. Meyer

Us Only

Dr. H. A. Ironside told the following story at a Bible conference. A small Christian sect of an exclusive temperament was holding a convention. Outside the auditorium there was displayed the motto, "Jesus Only." A strong wind blew the first three letters away. US ONLY is too often the spirit shown by Christians of narrow vision.

—S. S. Times

Who Are The "Elect"?

D. L. Moody used to put it very simply: "The elect are the 'whosoever wills'; the non-elect are the 'whosoever won'ts.'" This is exactly what Scripture teaches. The invitation is to all. Those who accept it are the elect. Remember, we are never told that Christ died for

the elect. But what does the Word say? "Christ died for the ungodly." Are you ungodly? Then He died for you. Put in your claim and enter into peace.

—D. L. Moody

Fruits of Repentance

Repentances to which John, and our blessed Lord, and all the apostles, and the New Testament in its entirety are calling men is that change of life which results from a recognition of the claims of God, a recognition of abiding holiness, and that always includes a sense of sin.

Repentance is a change of thought about God which removes Him from the realm of abstract into the realm of definite government. Repentance means acknowledgement of God's holiness as the supreme matter in contrast to every form of wrong-doing and impurity and sin.

—G. Campbell Morgan

Until next time, *MARANATHA!*

REPRINTS:

Hard To Interpret

H. L. Olmstead — 1922

It is a far stretch from a babe to an instructor; what the teacher is able to impart the babe is not able to interpret. The difficulty lies not with the truth to be learned nor with the teacher but in the incapacity of the babe.

Hebrews 5:11-14 is certainly an enlightening passage on this point. The apostle had just introduced the profound subject of "the priesthood after the order of Melchizedek." In the 11th verse he states that he has many things to say. "And hard of interpretation:" not necessarily because the subject itself was so difficult but they had "become dull of hearing"—"hard of interpretation, seeing ye are become dull of hearing." They were still in need of a milk diet when by reason of time they ought to have been teachers. Their dullness of hearing had resulted in a dwarfed spirituality and in a condition of "inexperience in the word of righteousness." It is also clear that this same dullness of hearing had resulted in a spiritual flabbiness because there had been no exercise of their senses in the matter of discerning good and evil."

This defect in hearing may be caused by many different things. Mental and spiritual laziness will produce it, and a habitual tendency to be satisfied with only what is considered plain and easy (we all like "easy" things) will result in weakening our organs of spiritual hearing. Another cause of such deafness is the development of the habit of listening only for certain things. Just the things which we like to hear and the things we have always heard. Thousands of sounds may be heard in the streets but the motorman hears only the whistle of the traffic officer or the siren's shrill sound or the clang of the bell on the car to the right or left. If we delight in hearing only certain truths

which seem to our minds to oppose the position of our religious neighbors or to substantiate our own theory, we are bound to become dull of hearing. Men whose hearts are open, whose senses are exercised to discern, will see many beautiful relations in the word of God and discover many helpful truths which the man dull of hearing will either reject entirely or will consider too hard; consequently from our self-satisfied spiritual baby minds we are likely to dismiss the whole thing as being either speculation or error. Also there are portions of the word of God, certain chapters or even whole books which are thrown aside in the scrap-heap as being too "hard of interpretation" when the reason is, that we have become dull of hearing ourselves because of our spiritual habits.

Another reason for our inability to hear is the false practise of cataloging the truth and labeling certain things "essential" and others "non-essential." Some pages in our catalogue are marked "important," others "not important." Again certain positions have been marked "settled" because certain men have placed their stamp of approval on them. The others are marked "impossible of settlement," "don't know," "let alone," etc. The one marked "essential," "important," "settled," etc., we either like to hear or take for granted without study or investigation. The others we will not hear. This is bound to result in sectarian prejudice and in a fossilized religion.

Perhaps the greatest reason for a dull ear is our presumption that we know it all or at least know all that needs to be known or that is of any value. Should a man examine a scale from the back of a sardine under a microscope and learn all there is to be known about that scale he certainly ought not to conclude that he knows all the wonders of the mighty deep.

Should preachers of Christ be satisfied with preaching only what the church are pleased to hear or what they have always heard? Shall we dwarf our own souls and the souls of them who hear us with the presentation of the alphabet, or the multiplication table only and never learn to read, write, or spell; never see any use of learning solid measure, percentage, algebra or even geometry? Certainly the word of God is bigger than that.

The case under consideration of the Hebrews is fine illustration. Melchizedek is without doubt a character about whom the Old Testament tells us very little. He was a king-priest and a type of Christ. His position was in some respects better than that of Abraham. He blessed Abraham and the "less is blessed of the better" (Heb. 7:7). His priesthood was a higher order than the Aaronic, for the whole Levitical priesthood who received tithes from Israel, paid tithes to Melchizedek; "through Abraham even Levi who received tithes, paid tithes for he was yet in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him" (Heb. 7:9). This and very much more was said of this mighty king-priest and why? Hadn't they heard the gospel? Didn't they know all the steps necessary to becoming Christians? Didn't they know what the plain commandments of the gospel were? They knew all their duties. Why burden their minds with this "impractical" knowledge? Ah, why? Their very devotion to Jesus Christ depended

upon knowing that the Aaronic order of the priesthood had never been perfect, *that only in a king-priest is their perfection of office*. This teaching which was neither plain precept, nor among the so-called essentials of the gospel was vitally necessary to the preservation of their uncorrupted faith in Jesus Christ and what might have been termed "impractical" was of the highest practical value. Let "the whole counsel of God" be our motto.

ETHICS:

The Sabbath and The Lord's Day

The article entitled "Sunday," by the English writers Robinson and Winrad, contains what we feel are a few inaccuracies. They seem to identify the New Covenant Lord's Day with the Old Covenant sabbath. Though we disagree with them about this point, it does not detract from the overall teaching and value of their article. For after all, Christ did say that a rest-day is for our benefit; that is a continuing principle.

To clarify the subject, we quote from the notes written sometime ago by Carl Kitzmiller for the Sunday School Lesson Quarterly:

SABBATH AND LORD'S DAY. Good people with good intentions sometimes speak of the sabbath and the Lord's Day as the same. There is a general tendency to take what was said concerning the sabbath and to apply it wholesale to the Lord's Day. For the sake of clarity of thought and obedience we should not confuse the two. The sabbath was on the seventh day of the week and was a sign between Jehovah and Israel (Exod. 31:17). It was a part of the law of Moses and as such was "nailed to the cross" (Col. 2:14). The church has never been under the sabbath law. This is the one commandment never re-given as a part of the new covenant. The Lord's Day (on the first day of the week) did not result from a changing of the sabbath but became established on its own by the Holy Spirit's work and guidance in the early church. Jesus rose on the first day of the week and appeared to His gathered disciples on that day. The church was born on Pentecost on the first day of the week (Lev. 23:15ff). The first day of the week was marked by the worship of the early church (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2). Further, Saturday is the seventh day of the week and is still observed by the Jew and certain Adventists as the sabbath, while Sunday is the first day of the week (see any calendar). They are two different days.

HOW SHOULD WE SPEND THE LORD'S DAY? Some apply the requirements for the sabbath to the Lord's Day. There is no solid basis for doing so. The N. T. does not establish how the Lord's Day is to be spent except to show it should be used for worship. The very name suggests that it should be used for the Lord; it is His day. Because of work patterns, it probably offers greater opportunity for evangelizing, teaching, personal visitation, etc. than some other days. Certainly any day is a time for doing good and this one especially, so. While the "no work" feature of the sabbath

is never given with reference to the Lord's Day, we should realize the practical value of a change of pace and a day free of most secular obligations. Like the entire new covenant, the day is not circumscribed by "Thou shalt nots" so much as it is by the dictates of love for God. Selfish neglect of the Lord's worship, neglect of other spiritual opportunity, or pursuit of sinful pleasure certainly constitute a misuse of it.

SUNDAY.

How should I as a Christian spend Sunday? Most people seem to regard it as a day for odd jobs and recreation. Is the old way of keeping Sunday now out-of-date?

How should I, as a Christian, spend my Sundays? Nowadays many of my acquaintances work in the garden, clean the car, and do odd jobs about the house on the first day of the week. If the weather is good they are off for an outing or the tennis court; if it is bad they read the Sunday papers and watch T. V. I go to church, of course, but is it all right for me to do some of these other things as well?

It is a mistake to regard this as a trivial question, since the use of Sunday is increasingly becoming one of the acid tests of Christian discipleship. There are people today who vaguely believe in Christianity, but who have no time for the services of the church. For example, experience shows that many people who profess to have been "converted" as the result of a Crusade, and who had a real desire to follow Christ and live a better life, fall away simply because they are not prepared to change their Sunday habits.

The staff of a church known to us carefully visited every house in their community, and were at first pleasantly surprised at the welcome they received. The people were glad that the church was there, and were interested in what it was trying to do. But when pressed to attend church themselves, "Don't touch our Sundays," they said. "We have no time on Sundays!"

Part of the problem is that Sunday has become more and more crowded. We find ourselves in the strange position of having far more leisure time than our parents and grandparents—yet seem to have no time at all! The week rushes by. Sunday remains as the only day for the odd jobs, or the only time when we can visit our friends. Radio and television have complicated the problem. If people want religion on Sundays (a very big "if" in most cases), then they can have it without the necessity of dressing up in their Sunday best and leaving home.

There is also the fact that in recent years the growing secularization of the Lord's Day has meant that church-going is no longer fashionable. It requires moral courage not to take the line of least resistance and follow the fashion. Most people simply get caught up with the crowd.

It is only fair to admit that there are differences of viewpoint regarding the right use of Sunday in different parts of the world, just as there have been in different centuries here at home. In parts of America, for instance, observance seems far from strict. The visitor from England may at first be surprised, then shocked, when he finds

zealous Christians reading Sunday newspapers or visiting restaurants. Again, we have found missionaries overseas with a reputation for "keenness" and scriptural orthodoxy apparently quite happy to do their washing and hang it out to dry after Sunday-morning worship. We merely give these illustrations to point out the need for Christian charity in making our judgments. There *are* differences and points of view.

A DAY OF REST

Let us first raise the question why we should observe Sunday. To begin with, there is great physical and mental benefit in a complete change. This is a nervous, tense age; it is said that one-third of our hospital beds are occupied by patients with mental illnesses. Why all this tension and strain? Is it that men and women have forgotten how to rest and relax? They need true *re-creation*. The greensman in charge of one of the leading golf courses said, "Even if the players do not need one day off in seven, the greens do!" During the last war, to meet the acute national crisis after the Dunkirk (Europe) evacuation, many workers were put on to a seven-day week. It was confirmed again and again over a period of time that the output actually fell when men had to work every day. We do our best work when we observe the day of rest.

GOD'S COMMANDMENT AND MAN'S NEED

This blessing of rest and renewal was only one of the benefits the Lord had in mind for us, when the Ten Commandments given through Moses commanded us to keep the sabbath holy. This Commandment is not arbitrary, but corresponds to the deepest needs of man in his relationship to God and to his fellowmen, to his family, and to his work. Christ has fulfilled, not abolished, this law and institution. We are to keep the day holy to the Lord—as that which belongs to God for His entire and special use. This is intended as part of our spiritual training, an ordinance to help us in a practical, definite, and regular way to recognize God's claim on our lives. To know that it is His will and command is itself a sufficient reason to every loyal and obedient servant of the Lord.

Some might reply: "But all my days are dedicated to God. I seek to please Him on Monday, Tuesday, and every other day." The answer to this is that it is part of God's plan throughout Scripture to help us to consecrate the whole by the special consecration of a part. The man who tithes his income and so regards one part as belonging in a special sense to the Lord, is far more likely to use the rest of his money in a right and proper way. So by keeping one day holy to the Lord, in a special way, He is helping us to consecrate all our days.

Is God's strategy wrong? Is His method mistaken? Take a look at those who do not observe Sunday. Do they, in fact, serve God on Tuesdays and Saturdays? What is the testimony of experience here? Is it not rather true that those people who keep Sunday as a holy day are more zealous and effective in the service of Christ during the rest of the week?

MADE FOR MAN

Our Lord's definite principle about the positive use of the holy day was expressed in the words, "The sabbath was made for man."

That is to say, He affirmed that God made it, not man; and that it was intended as a divine ordinance for man's good, not to restrict and hamper us, but for our highest joy and welfare. He went on to say, "Not man for the sabbath." It is the need of man we must have in mind, not the sabbath as an impersonal institution.

It exists for people, to serve and meet their needs. We are wrong therefore if we attempt to make the sabbath an end in itself, as the Scribes and Pharisees were doing, hedging it about with hundreds of petty prohibitions. What then should be the positive use of this one day in seven, especially in the light of our Lord's own practice?

WORSHIP, AND THE FAMILY

Worship comes first. Christ Himself always went to the synagogue, which was essentially a place for worship, as well as a Bible school. Sunday presents us today with greatly needed opportunities for worship, Bible study, and profitable reading. The Gospels also make it clear that our Lord did positive good on the sabbath; for example, works of healing. This opens up to us whole fields of Christian service. Helpful work for others along the line of God's purpose is legitimate on the holy day. There is an obvious difference between the work of the nurse and that of the person merely catering for other people's amusement.

In the Ten Commandments, "Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy" is itself a commandment given to the family, and mentions explicitly sons and daughters, the family servants or employees, even the domestic animals. It is followed by "Honor thy father and thy mother." The family nowadays tends to be scattered throughout most of the week, and Sunday should therefore be a day for happy family fellowship. When each individual member pursues his or her own pleasure a step downward has been taken in the breaking up of the family spirit.

SUNDAY GAMES

But why should we not spend Sunday as we please? And why not Sunday games? We have stated the most important reason. It is God's commandment and purpose that we should keep one day holy to Him—devote it entirely to His purposes, and not our own. The idea underlying the Jewish sabbath is worked out in the Lord's Day of Resurrection, which the Christian should regard as belonging entirely to the Lord.

The Christian Sunday is meant for the full re-creation of body, mind, and spirit, through communion with God. It is easy to talk about worshipping God more easily by the sea or in the green fields—but do Sunday-trippers, in fact, do so? If on a warm summer Sunday evening you have ever witnessed the stream of traffic returning from the coast you will hardly have been impressed by the spirit of worship!

And what of our influence, as Christians, on other people? God means us to be different. Are we influencing others for Christ if we spend our Sundays just like the non-Christian? Again we must listen to the voice of experience. The effective Christians are found among those who respect the sanctity of Sunday. And we must not forget that Sunday games and amusements often employ others unnecessarily,

and so prevent them from enjoying this special day of rest and worship.

The thin end of the wedge very soon becomes the thick end. Start to get slack about a few seeming trifles, and you will discover before long that it becomes easy to compromise over matters far more important. Sunday should certainly never be a day of gloom, but rather of delight. Those who dedicate it wholly to God find a joy and an uplift unknown to others who seek to spend it "as they please." Spend it as God pleases, and your joy will not be confined to Sundays, for the old couplet remains true:

A Sunday well spent, Brings a week of content.

Larry Miles, a member of the Portland Avenue congregation, is working in Cincinnati and has taken classes at Cincinnati Bible Seminary.



Reflections On The Restoration Movement: The Second Generation

Larry Miles

DANIEL SOMMER'S SEVENTY YEARS OF SERVICE

Part II: 1889 - 1940

Daniel Sommer was one of the most controversial figures to grace the pages of restoration history. He was an outstanding preacher of the gospel who was dedicated to seeking after the Ancient Order of Things. In this essay, we want to chronicle his life from 1889 until his death in Indianapolis, Indiana, in 1940.

Sommer was the "spokesman" for the ultra-conservative brethren who were mostly centered in the midwest. He was the editor of the *Octographic Review* later called the *Apostolic Review*. He was to wield great influence from editing a religious periodical. The first event we want to mention is one of great importance. The tide of liberalism among the Disciples of Christ was rising. Daniel Sommer decided to call the hand of the digressives in Illinois and in all the land. The place was to be Sand Creek, Illinois. Every year there was a mass meeting held there. In 1889 it is estimated that there were close to 6,000 people present to hear Daniel Sommer.

Sand Creek, Illinois, on August 18, 1889, will go down in our history as a sad day, a day when the lines of demarcation were drawn. Dr. Earl Irvin West, in *Search for the Ancient Order*, has this to say:

"On Sunday, August 18, 1889, six thousand members of the church gathered in Shelby County, Illinois, at the site of the old Sand Creek congregation in a great mass meeting. Since 1873, large masses of brethren had congregated at this site to enjoy a few days of fellowship, and to have opportunities of hearing prominent preachers. With the passing of years the general condition of the church had a tendency to reflect itself on this gathering, so they came somberly togeth-

er contemplating the rising threat of division within the church. On this particular Sunday in 1889, the taciturn audience listened for an hour and forty minutes while Daniel Sommer spoke on the condition of the church. Sommer charged the 'innovators' with being responsible for all the division, discord, bitterness and strife within the church. He claimed that they had constantly asked these men not to push their innovations, but they had been refused. The missionary society and instrumental music were being pushed into the churches, driving a wedge between the brethren. What then was to be done?"

As you will recall, one of the most important of the non-inspired writings was Thomas Campbell's *Declaration and Address*. In it he called for recognizing all Christians as God's children. In contrast, the *Address and Declaration* given on August 18, 1889, and read by Elder P. D. Warren calls for division. We want to give you the last paragraph of this document. In the *Christian Leader*, dated September 10, 1889, we read the following:

"It is, therefore, with the view, if possible, of counteracting the usages and practices that have crept into the churches that this effort on the part of the congregations hereafter named is made. And now, in closing up this address and declaration, we state that we are impelled from a sense of duty to say that all such as are guilty of teaching or allowing and practicing the many innovations and corruptions to which we have referred, after having had sufficient time for meditation and reflection, if they will not turn away from such abominations, **THAT WE CANNOT AND WILL NOT REGARD THEM AS BRETHERN.**"

My friends, isn't this a sad case of sectarianism. This event, and others in our history, have shown without a shadow of a doubt that we do not seek after Biblical unity. We seem to be more concerned with building up and maintaining our own segments. Oh, that we as true New Testament Christians, could work together for the unity of all true believers in Christ.

What were some of the reactions to Sommer's sermon at Sand Creek and to the *Address and Declaration*? We want to give two responses. Writing in the *Christian Standard* dated June 18, 1892, Russell Errett wrote the following:

"The churches should be on their guard. They should know that Daniel Sommer has abandoned apostolic ground and is no more identified with the Disciples of Christ than Sidney Rigden.

Writing in the *Gospel Advocate* on June 30, 1892, J. C. McQuiddy wrote the following as a reply to Daniel Sommer and also as a reply to Russell Errett and the *Christian Standard*:

"Well for our part, the Advocate needs no second call to express its sentiments on this momentous matter. The Sand Creek manifesto was manifest folly, and the Advocate emphatically denies any sympathy with Sommerism — whatever that is — Sand Creekism, Sand Lotism, Sansculottism, Standardism or any other partyism in religion. The Advocate is for Christ and His Church (chosen ones) and is in ardent sympathy with all who are drawing their life from Him who is the true vine... It is not trying to build a church on the teachings of the Standard's Fathers, nor is it following anybody's Fathers."

Although McQuiddy is censuring the methods of Somner, David Lipscomb was defending the aims of Sommer. So, thus the *Advocate* in reality, stood on some common ground with Daniel Sommer and the *Octographic Review*.

(to be continued)

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